



HUNTING FOR ANSWERS

By Greg Freeman
Photos by Ron Wilson

North Dakota deer gun hunters kick off the 2006 season on November 10 with a strong white-tailed deer population covering much of the northeastern and north central portions of the state, and stable mule deer numbers in the southwest.

The thriving whitetail population has prompted the state Game and Fish Department to issue more than 100,000 licenses for the sixth consecutive year, although 2006 marks the first year since the turn of the century that a new record has not been set. However, this year's figure of 143,500 licenses is second only to last year's 145,600.

With that said, a lot of deer hunters have covered North Dakota's prairie the last handful of years, and when 80,000 deer hunters hit the field opening weekend, situations unfold that are sure to leave questions in search of answers.

Each year Game and Fish Department personnel field a number of questions from hunters prior to and during the deer season. The most popular question asked prior to the season originates from those hunters in western North Dakota in the Mountain Time Zone, who want to know when it is legal to shoot on opening day? The answer is 11 a.m. Mountain Time.

There will always be hunters with questions. Some of the more common are discussed in this piece. Hunters with further questions are encouraged to call the Department at 701-328-6300, from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. weekdays.

What is the procedure for donating venison to my neighbor?

Processed and packaged meat of legally harvested game may be gifted to another. Unprocessed or unpackaged meat may be gifted prior to reaching the licensee's permanent residence only if a transportation permit is obtained and accompanies the game meat, or after reaching the licensee's permanent residence if accompanied by the carcass tag of the person who harvested the game.

I can't find my deer license. What should I do?

Deer hunters in need of a replacement license can print out a duplicate (replacement) license application from the Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov, or can call 701-328-6300 to have an application mailed or faxed. County auditors also have copies of this form. The application must be completely filled out and notarized, and sent back to the Department with a fee. You may not hunt without the license in your possession.

What should I do if I find a wounded deer?

Contact a game warden. Do not shoot the deer unless you want to tag it, or are instructed by the warden to do so.

Can I hunt on a section line if it is posted on both sides?

No. If the land is posted on both sides, the section line is closed to hunting, but open for travel.

Can I drive off-trail to retrieve a deer on Private Land Open To Sportsmen lands?

Not unless you receive permission from the landowner.

Can I transport someone else's deer?

Yes, but you will need a permit from a game warden, or a local law enforcement agency. The license holder, person transporting the animal, and the carcass must be presented to authorities before the permit is issued.

Don't wait until the last minute to receive the transport permit. Immediately after the animal has been harvested, it is best to plan ahead by contacting a game warden and make arrangements to receive the permit.

Can I drive off-trail to retrieve a deer on a state wildlife management area?

No. You may not drive off-trail on state wildlife management areas, national wildlife refuges, waterfowl production areas, or state school land. In addition, a travel policy confines most motorized vehicles (except snowmobiles) to existing roads and trails on all U.S. Forest Service public land in North Dakota, including the Little Missouri, Sheyenne and Cedar River national grasslands.

What if I am going to take my deer head to a taxidermist and meat to a butcher shop?

How do I keep the tag with it all?

The tag should remain with the head and the carcass tag should remain with the meat.

Can I use my first season antlerless license during the muzzle-loader season?

No. The first season license may be used only for the regular deer gun season.

When can I use a second, third or additional concurrent season license?

Hunters can use additional doe licenses during the archery season with a bow; the deer gun season with a bow, rifle, or muzzle-loader; or during the muzzle-loader season with a muzzle-loader. These licenses must be used for antlerless deer only, and hunters must stay in the unit to which the license is assigned.

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